

governmental bodies in the INRCOG region and the State of Iowa.

Through INRCOG's intergovernmental communication and cooperation have flourished and public-private partnerships have been enhanced. The ability of Iowa communities to plan for their own future has been enriched. I wish them many more years of successful service for the success of Iowa's communities, for their efforts will continue to strengthen the backbone of America's governmental system, thus enriching the lives of our citizens.●

REMEMBERING VETERANS

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to make a few remarks about the distinguished service of United States veterans. As Veterans Day approaches, we look forward to honoring the men and women who have served this country with bravery, honor, and valor. I am submitting, for my colleagues, a May 28, 1998 article from the Los Angeles Times written by Patty Andrews, one of the Andrews Sisters. The Andrews Sisters spent much of World War II entertaining the young men who fought so courageously in Europe, the Pacific, Africa, and other parts of the world. In this stirring piece, Ms. Andrews details the service and sacrifices of all of those who contributed to the war effort, and describes how she and her sisters helped to build morale and comforted the wounded.

The article follows:

[From the Los Angeles Times, May 25, 1998]

BUGLE BOYS OF COMPANY B DIED TO KEEP
AMERICA FREE

(By Patty Andrews)

My sisters and I probably met face to face with more soldiers in World War II than any general or field marshal. The Andrews Sisters entertained tens of thousands of GIs at bases here and abroad throughout the war and I can still see so many of their smiling American faces. I sometimes wonder how many of those faces made it home safely and how many are now just faint memories. I'll carry their memory for as long as I live. But then what? With nothing to publicly commemorate those GIs, their deeds will be forgotten.

The faces of the survivors are now creased and seasoned by the years—but they still smile when they see me. And I see them all the time, in airports and shopping malls. The veterans of global war are living their autumn years happily, oblivious to the fact that they are walking history.

We have a common bond. We were all soldiers in the greatest war ever. And we share a knowing wink—if you weren't there you'd never understand the terror of total war or exhilaration of saving the world from evil incarnate. I guess I remind the veterans that it all really happened, that it wasn't some hazy memory, that they answered the call and succeeded beyond all expectation. They won a victory so complete that we hardly remember a time when America wasn't a superpower or the most prosperous nation on Earth or one of the few remaining democracies standing against a global gang of dictators. Today we take it all for granted.

Those who died to make it possible for us to forget that brutal era would no doubt be

satisfied that their sacrifice was worth it. But they were so young. The soldiers who were in their late teens and early 20s. So young that the shows had the flavor of a huge high school football game or a Boy Scout jamboree. Nearly half a million of these brave kids would never know if we won or lost the war or how 50 years of peace and prosperity would transform their country. Their faces will always be innocent and brave, but unknowing.

My sisters and I were innocent too, but not for long. We cheered the boys as they left for war but we also welcomed back the wounded and shattered. Those are some of the faces I will never forget. In one San Francisco hospital ward we were briefed about what we were about to see, and we were told not to show too much emotion. Behind the doors of that dire ward were young faces contorted with pain or frozen and mute. The sight of these boys—no different than the thousands of others we entertained except that they had been chewed up and spat out by the maw of war—brought home to me the absolute horror of war and the enormity of our debt to them.

In that frightful infirmary we talked, sang and tried to do something—anything—to bring a moment of pleasure, maybe a smile or a look of hope that life will somehow be better. I tried but could not begin to match their contribution. None of us can ever fully repay those boys who sacrificed their youth so we could forget such horror existed. But we need to try.

Today, before the memories fade and before the last veteran dies, we need to enshrine their courage. We need a permanent place to honor the generation that gave so much so long ago. We need a memorial that matches their monumental sacrifice and their towering devotion to freedom. In short, we need an official World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington. The site has already been selected—all we need now is the will to build it.

Helping to build morale and comfort the wounded through our music changed and fulfilled my life, as it did the lives of my sisters, Laverne and Maxene. We were privileged to know so many courageous men and women willing to give their lives for freedom. It's ironic that because of their sacrifice, we can use words like "freedom" and "democracy" today without having to measure their cost. We must honor those brave young people who paid the price.●

RECOGNIZING OMER O'NEIL

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Omer O'Neil of the Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce. He has announced his retirement after serving as President of the Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce since 1987.

Omer O'Neil has been a true leader with the Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce and in the Downriver communities of Metropolitan Detroit. During his tenure as President, the Chamber saw a growth in its membership as well as its leadership role in the communities it serves. The Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce represents over 1,200 member businesses and has become a leader in redefining the economic landscape of the Downriver area.

Omer O'Neil's service expands beyond his role with the Chamber. He served on the Allen Park City Council and was

twice elected Mayor Pro-Tempore and has volunteered numerable hours to local charitable organizations and causes, including Right to Life of Michigan.

I want to once again express my sincerest appreciation and congratulations to Omer O'Neil for the service and leadership he has provided the Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce and the Downriver communities. I wish Omer well in his retirement years.●

CLASS ACTION REFORM

● Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise to express my continued strong interest in meaningful class action reform—and to announce that, although we do not have the time necessary to move legislation any further this year, class action reform remains one of my highest priorities. Although many class action lawsuits do result in significant and important benefits for class members and society, too many class lawyers put their self-interest above the best interests of their clients—resulting in unfair and abusive settlements that shortchange class members while their lawyers line their pockets with high fees.

To address this growing problem, Senator GRASSLEY and I introduced the Class Action Fairness Act of 1998 (S. 2083). The bill is a moderate approach to weed out the worst abuses, while preserving the benefits of class actions. It encourages closer scrutiny of class actions through several provisions. It requires that proposed class action settlements be in plain, easily understandable English and be sent to state attorneys general, so they have an opportunity to weigh in with any objections. It requires courts to determine what damages will actually be paid to class members before awarding attorneys' fees, rather than calculating fees based on overvalued estimates of meaningless coupon settlements. And it moves more class actions to federal courts, which generally give closer scrutiny than state courts and can promote efficiency and avoid a collusive "race to settlement" by consolidating overlapping cases.

These proposals have earned a broad range of support. Even Judge Paul Niemeyer, the Chair of the Judicial Conference's Advisory Committee on Civil Rules, who has studied class actions closely and testified before Congress on this issue, expressed his support for this "modest" measure, noting in particular that increasing federal jurisdiction over class actions will be a positive "meaningful step."

This year, our bipartisan measure was reported favorably by the Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight and the Courts. Unfortunately, as the term has winded down, we have been too busy with other pressing issues to give this proposal the full consideration it deserves. Still, we already have made several revisions